

17
BLOCK Tudor and Avril enter

Tudor Hello all.

Miriam (*standing*) Tudor. Avril. There's nice to see you. (*It's not*) I'm sorry I can't offer you any tea. They're digging up a gas main at the bottom of the street so our cooker is off.

Tudor Funny. I didn't see any workmen about.

Miriam Which way did you come?

Tudor (*indicating with his finger*) The top way.

Avril (*indicating the same*) Top way.

Miriam Yes, well, they're at the bottom end. (*She heads for the cabinet*)

Mavis (*standing*) Hello. My name's Mavis.

Tudor Hello, luv.

Mavis Who are you then?

Tudor Tudor.

Mavis And who's this?

Tudor Don't you remember Avril?

Mavis Course I do. Sit down, Sandra.

Austin stands and gives Avril his seat

I'd better introduce you all. (Introducing Josey) This one's Jean.

Tudor (nodding) Jean.

Avril Jean.

Mavis And that's Arthur. (She indicates Austin)

Tudor (saluting him) Arthur.

Avril Arthur.

Miriam And this is the new one. (Pointing to Miriam) Dorothy.

Tudor (smiling and nodding to Miriam) Dorothy.

Avril Dorothy.

Mavis Only came in this morning. Attempted suicide. Tablets. (Taking her pills from out of her bag) Here you are, look. (Giving them to him) Keep them safe for her.

Miriam (taking the pills from Tudor and gently pushing him out of the way) Austin, why don't you take Mavis in the other room. Try the television, there might be something on for her—University Challenge, or Bagpuss.

Austin (moving back to Miriam) I'm not going in there on my own.

Miriam Josey will go with you.

Josey I was just going out. (She gets up)

Miriam You can go later. Come on, Mavis. Go next door with Doctor Davis and the nurse.

Mavis is now standing between Austin and Josey

Mavis Am I going to have an internal?

Miriam No, you're going to have your eyes tested.

(After a pause) She's hard work, but she is my sister after all.

(Austin and Josey carry Mavis off by her elbows)

Tudor Of course, yes, exactly.

Avril Exactly.

Slight pause

Tudor Come about the arrangements I have. Austin never came round like you said he would.

Miriam Didn't he let you know? I told him to.

Tudor Had a lot on his mind I expect—with everything.

Avril Everything.

Miriam Well the service is today. It's from here. And it's one o'clock. (She sits)

Tudor Er—what about the spread, then?

Miriam What about it?

Tudor Will that take place here as well? Or is it going to be at someone else's?

Avril Else's?

Miriam No, that's here too. We were going to have it at my father's house but I thought better of it.

Avril stands up and tugs at Tudor's arm. They mouth something to each other

What is it?

Avril Go on, tell her.

Tudor (after a slight pause) Well, it's about Mavis. (Wandering about) We were talking about it the other night.

Avril Night.

Tudor Weren't we?

Avril Yes.

Tudor Yes. And we thought perhaps under the circumstances, she'd like to come to us. Instead of going back to that other place.

Avril (distastefully) Other place.

Tudor Do you think she'd like that? We've got a spare room.

Miriam (a moment while she thinks she has summed it all up) You've been talking to our Maureen, have you?

Tudor Maureen? No. We haven't seen her.

Miriam Today. This morning. You haven't seen her this morning?

Tudor We haven't been out till now.

Avril Now.

Miriam (after a slight pause) Well, it's very kind of you both to offer to take her on, but there isn't any need—really.

Tudor Ah but we'd like to.

Avril Like to, yes.

Miriam (standing) I know how you feel about sending her back to that "other place". Austin and I have a similar opinion. That's why we've decided to keep her on here.

Tudor (delighted) So she's staying with you, then?

Miriam We thought it best.

Tudor Well, I think that's marvellous.

Avril 'Lious.

Miriam I'll remember your offer though, and if you'd like to have her with you from time to time, I'm sure we could arrange something.

Tudor I'm glad you've been able to sort something out. I was saying to

Avril—

Avril He was saying, yes.

Tudor I didn't like the thought of Mavis going back to that place all on her own.

Miriam Oh she wasn't short of friends—from what I can gather. Especially the male of the gender.

Tudor Well you know Mavis. She was always one for the boys. When she was younger of course. And she was an attractive little thing too.

Avril (patting the back of her head) "Tractive, yes.

Austin enters